DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 050 452 EA 003 445

AUTHOR Campbell, Roald F.
TITLE The Evaluation of Administrative Performance.
PUB DATE Feb 71
NOTE 12p.; Paper presented at American Association of School Administrators Annual Convention. (103rd, Atlantic City, New Jersey, February 20-24, 1971)

EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS *Administrator Evaluation, *Administrator Qualifications, *Administrator Role, *Administrator Selection, *Evaluation Criteria, Leadership Responsibility, Performance Factors, Professional Recognition, Role Perception, School Superintendents, Speeches

ABSTRACT

This document discusses some of the problems in and offers suggestions for the implementation of administrator evaluation. The author believes that a set of criteria for functions defined in behavioral terms is necessary for an evaluation of administrative performance and emphasizes that these criteria should be utilized at the time a potential administrator applies to graduate school and again when he applies for an administrative position. A plan is proposed for the establishment of a National Commission for the Evaluation of Administrative Performance in Education, which involves the collaboration of school board members, superintendents, and professors of educational administration in nominating commission members. (Author/MLF)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

ED050452

THE EVALUATION OF ADMINISTRATIVE PERFORMANCE**

Roald F. Campbell

The evaluation of administrative performance - can it be done? if so, how? is the question. In a rather rash moment I agreed to attempt an answer. It is not difficult to understand how such a question was raised. Perhaps there has long been some skepticism about what administrators do. The topic is also part of the current accountability syndrome. If teachers are to be held accountable, why not administrators? Moreover, many people, including some in federal agencies, are disenchanted with school administrators, particularly when they appear to be unresponsive to changes which, at least to others, appear to be both urgent and easy to make.

But there are even more compelling reasons than the current climate for dealing with such a topic. Every profession needs to assess itself - to determine the roles of its members, and to develop procedures whereby the effectiveness of their performance can be ascertained. Only in so doing can knowledge be extended and individual growth assured. Both specialized knowledge and individual growth are required if a profession is to serve the larger society, still one of the hall marks of any profession.

Thus, both current conditions and the more compelling need for professional appraisal stimulate me to give more attention to this topic. I shall examine some of the problems surrounding such a program, describe a process which could at least move us toward the appraisal of administrative performance, and suggest some of the ways by which such a process could be implemented. While I see the performance of superintendents as central to this consideration, I hope the discussion will also have some relevance for other administrative personnel in school systems.

**Prepared for the meeting of American Association of School Administrators, Atlantic City, N.J., February, 1971.

EA 003 445

Some of the Problems

There are at least three sets of problems as we approach this topic. The first set we might call situational constraints. There is, for instance, the general expectation that an administrator can change things. Frequently, people who hold this expectation overlook the fact that performance is always a product of person and situation, not of person alone. Schools, where the change is anticipated, are very complex social systems and seldom can one person cope successfully with all the internal and external forces involved. For instance, I do not recall a single major proposal sponsored by the Board of Education or the General Superintendent of the Chicago Schools over a recent four-year period that did not meet with the immediate opposition of 40 to 60 per cent of the citizens. Administrators often work within very narrow tolerances.

Another aspect of the situation is found in the differential perceptions held for the administrative role. To many people, in and out of school systems, the administrator should be essentially an educator, a teacher, an expert in instruction. To others, he should be an adroit manager of the organization, showing on one hand, empathy for teachers and other personnel, and on the other hand, capacity for making hard but fair decisions involving persons involved. To still others, the administrator should be a public relations expert eliciting both psychological and financial support for the school from the larger society.

Related to these differential role perceptions for the administrator is confusion in the minds of many persons about the meaning of leadership. In one sense, the administrator is by definition a leader. Yet administrators, many times, appear to give precious little leadership, particularly if one means by leadership the charting of new directions and the energizing of people to move in those directions. Sometimes when administrators do achieve some movement for the organization such movement is characterized, particularly by those who opposed it, as domination or dictatorship, not leadership.

The shoals of leadership also have another dimension. Schools are generally rather conservative and cautious organizations. This characteristic is frequently lamented by impatient reformers. As a result great emphasis often has been placed on change in school organizations and the role administrators should plan in bringing about such change. Whether or not justified this emphasis on change has tended to down grade the importance of maintenance in on-going organizations such as schools. I suspect that most school administrators must give a great part of their energy to maintaining the organization and a minor fraction to changing it. The necessity for this kind of division frequently is not well understood.

Finally, the value conflicts of the larger society are reflected in educational organizations. For instance, the concerns about the inhumanity of war, the neglect of the poor, and the defilement of the environment, on one hand, and the demand for more law and order, on the other, have their counterparts in the school. Some have found the schools "grim, oppressive, and joyless" and place great stress on making them more humane institutions. Others contend that schools, like colleges, are too permissive and that they must be much more concerned with discipline. The administrator is obviously caught in these cross winds which involve both political debate and organizational controversy.

These constraints suggest that the evaluation of administrative performance is at best a complex and difficult undertaking. Other problems, perhaps even more onerous than the constraints enumerated above, have to do with the evaluation process and the implementation of that process each of which will now be treated.

The Evaluation Process

In evaluating administrative performance, as in evaluation generally, we must have a set of criteria, to guide the process. The first step is one of clarifying the purposes or functions of administration. Despite a number of useful formulations of the components of administration, there is still much confusion, as noted above, about what the administrator does or should do. Without in any sense

ruling out other formulations, for this presentation I suggest that the major functions of the administrator are as follows:

1. To influence the goals and purposes of the organization and to help clarify those purposes in and out of the organization.

2. To encourage and support the development of programs designed to implement the purposes.

3. To recruit and organize persons into productive teams to implement the appropriate programs.

4. To procure and allocate the necessary resources to support the programs in the order of priority established.

5. To evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency by which all of these functions are being achieved.

Clearly no administrator can accomplish these functions alone. None-the-less it is his function to see that purposes get clarified, that programs get developed, that staffing is facilitated, that resources are procured and used wisely, and that some appraisal of the whole process is made. It should also be clear that in a public organization, such as a school system, that the achievement of the administrative tasks will require the collaboration of many persons both in and out of the organization.

While we have dealt with five major functions of administration, it should be noted that at particular times and places one function may need more attention than others. In a recent study of the Herold Hunt administration in Chicago,[1] for instance, it was found that when Mr. Hunt assumed the superintendency in 1947 his chief goal became that of re-establishing confidence in the school system. As a result he gave much more attention, initially, to goals and direction with both staff and public than he did to some of the other functions. In time he recognized the dire need for more resources and he was then in a position to marshall support for the expansion of the state aid program.

If we accept this delineation of administration as having to do with purpose, programs, staffing, resources, and evaluation, our second step is one of defining each of these functions in behavioral terms. While no exhaustive list of

behaviors can be suggested in this paper, we can give examples of the kinds of behaviors that might be found.

With respect to purpose, we might expect the administrator to engage in speaking and writing about the purpose and direction in his communication with teachers and other staff members, and with parents and other lay citizens. The administrator might also be expected frequently to relate purposes to programs in his communication with staff members. Likewise, we might expect him to relate purposes to programs and budget requests in his recommendations to the board of education or to his administrative superiors.

Regarding programs, we think the administrator might initiate long range planning studies of school district needs. We might also find him using the results of these studies as bases for the establishment of program priorities. Moreover, we might find that he encourages the development of programs to meet particular needs and that he supports qualified persons in their efforts to develop such programs.

In the area of staffing we might expect the administrator to review the staffing needs of the programs proposed. We might find these staffing needs reflected in budget requests. In addition, we might find that the identification and selection procedures followed in the selection of new staff members have been developed with some care and appropriately followed.

Regarding revenues, we might expect that the administrator has sought revenues from both public and private sources, and at local, state, and national levels. Also, we might expect that a plan of priority allocation is followed in budget building. When available revenues will not support all aspects of the program, priorities are established so that cuts are selective rather than general.

With respect to evaluation, we might expect to find the administrator engaged in short and bng range planning. To achieve this end he may support the establishment of a planning and research facility. We might also expect to find the administrator supporting the dissemination of research findings and some

evidence that program evaluation is taken into account in program continuation and in budget allocations.

But the evaluation process which we are suggesting here can not stop with the establishment of criteria and the behavioral definition of those criteria. A third step is necessary; behavior or performance must make a difference, there must be some outcomes. This is a hard requirement. In education, generally, we have tended to accept the position that if we paid enough attention to the inputs that the outputs would follow almost automatically. We now know that is not true in teaching. Nor is it true in administration. We have reached the point where we must focus on the outputs. In other words, the behavior of the administrator should have changed things in the organization. Thus, evidence should be found and collected to suggest that purpose and direction are clearer to staff members, that programs are more appropriate to needs, that staff members are more competent, that priorities are understood and accepted, and that information is used more widely in decision making.

My value positions obviously include such things as the use of information, adequate communication, and a commitment of organization members to group goals. All evaluation is based upon certain value positions. What is suggested here is that the value positions or criteria be made explicit, that every reasonable step be taken to share those positions with other members of the organization and that this process result in more effective operation.

One further word about the evaluation process. The performance of any administrator needs to be viewed not only in terms of what happened in the organization but also in terms of the larger context in which the organization exists. For instance, one might expect less movement in an experienced, stable, conservative faculty than in a young, growing, and mobile faculty. Or, the possible performance on the part of an administrator might be quite different when working with a school board given to role avoidance, as Lipham,[2] found in his study, over one given to role acceptance. Or, as noted by McCarty,[3] after examining a number

of communities, that in a dominated community the superintendent can be little more than a chore boy, whereas in a pluralistic community he can exercise some leadership. Clearly, any interpretation of administrative performance will require consideration of the context within which that performance was achieved.

Implementation

In terms of our initial question, we have said that at least a beginning can be made toward the evaluation of administrative performance. The question of how must now be considered. Since administration of schools goes on in 50 states and in some 2,000 school districts and not within a national structure any plan of implementation must rely chiefly on education and influence not on fiat and power. However, there are in our decentralized system two major points where evaluation can play a major role. The first is at the point of admission to graduate school. All major institutions make some selection of students who are to study administration. A consideration of that process and how it can be improved deserves a more complete treatment than it can receive here, hence it will be deferred for some future consideration. We should note in passing, however, that the university must decide what potentials in the candidates hold the greatest promise for future performance. In other words the task is often not one of assessing performance, rather one of relating certain characteristics related to performance. Our present state of knowledge does not permit us to speak with great confidence about that relationship. University professors should be held accountable for studies leading to a better understanding of that relationship.

We come then to the second point where evaluation of administrative performance takes place; the point of employment and re-employment. Let us consider the employment of superintendents first. Boards of education are the ostensible employers of superintendents. A board of education need not seek advice regarding this process but it nearly always gets some advice whether sought or not. Often teachers and teachers organizations says something about the criteria which they think ought to be used in the process. Frequently, lay citizens individually or

through organizations suggest criteria and even candidates.

Many boards of education now seek more systematic help in the process of selecting a superintendent. Frequently, consultants from universities or from consulting firms are asked to help the board with this important task. Qualified consultants can help do the following things: (1) make some assessment of the nature of the community and its schools and what these factors suggest for the new man, (2) help the board and sometimes teachers and lay citizens in the development of criteria to be used in the selection process, (3) seek suitable candiates from major universities and other sources, and (4) screen candidates in terms of the criteria and provide the board with a limited number of well qualified nominees. At that point the board usually takes over, interviews all recommended nominees, makes further inquiry about them as needed, agrees upon the person wanted, and negotiates with him for the position.

The important points for our purpose here are the development of criteria for selection and the collection of evidence bearing upon those criteria. As consultants discuss criteria with board members and with others they frequently find many of the administrative functions suggested above being advocated. One hears remarks such as the following: "we need a man who can give the staff and the community some sense of purpose;" or "we need a man who recognizes that we must have programs to serve all of the pupils, not just the college bound;" or "we need a man who knows how to select good principals and can delegate many things to them," or "we are hard pressed for money and we need a man who can help us set some priorities instead of just asking more for everything;" or "we need a man who can help us understand how well we are doing, who has some sense of cost-benefit analysis." These and similar questions obviously become bases for the formulation of selection criteria.

While the employment of superintendents focuses on the responsibility of the board of education, the employment of central office personnel and principals becomes a major function of the superintendent. The superintendent may seek help

in this process, indeed he may delegate much of it to major assistants, but he is responsible for the employment and re-employment of administrative personnel in the school system. In these processes there is again need for the establishment of criteria which relate to the administrative function. For many central office positions these criteria may be quite specific since persons filling those positions are required to perform specialized tasks having to do with such things as personnel selection, curriculum development, or business management.

For the principalship, however, the range of administrative responsiblity is almost as broad as it is for the superintendent. Particularly, is this the case with the current emphasis on decentralization and the necessity that principals become much more autonomous as heads of their respective schools. Thus, principals are expected to give leadership to staff and community concerning purpose and direction, to encourage the development of appropriate programs, to help select and organize personnel to operate the programs, to seek resources and to establish some priorities in their use, and to employ evaluation procedures that permit judgments about the effectiveness of programs. Just as suggested for superintendents above, these administrative functions should become the bases for the development of behaviorial criteria which would aid in the selection and retentions of persons in the principalship.

In taking the position that performance criteria in the selection of administrators can be applied at two major points - admission to graduate study and employment - I may have over simplified the matter. Graduation from training programs and state certification procedures often make at least some reference to the competence of the persons involved. Unfortunately, neither of the processes considered from a nation-wide basis are very effective. Training programs, often poorly conceived, are widely dispersed among many institutions, good and bad, hence the certificate of completion has little meaning. State certification is often the product of professional compromise with little evidence that the various training components make any difference in administrative performance. Even these dubious

requirements seldom represent more than minimums, hence most employers place little reliance on them.

As one looks to the future, however, graduation from a training program or state certification might take on much more meaning. If training institutions could be reduced in number and improved in quality, and if student appraisal were based on performance criteria instead of upon credit hours completed or grades received, a significant additional point for the evaluation of administrative performance would have been established. It may also be possible to improve certification procedures in the various states by moving their requirements away from courses completed or even programs completed toward performance criteria. Most hope for the improvement of certification may lie in the establishment of some kind of nation-wide approach to the problem. In any case, further consideration of this problem should not be limited to the improvement of conditions as they now exist; emerging developments should also be considered.

Whether we deal with conditions as they now exist or with new arrangements which might be established, it seems clear that major actors in the process of evaluating administrative performance will be school board members, superintendents, and professors of educational administration. I think the responsibility for improvement should be placed squarely on these three sets of actors. Thus, it seems clear that the implementation of any program designed to improve the evaluation of administrative performance must involve the collaboration of these three groups. I propose, therefore, the establishment of a National Commission for the Evaluation of Administrative Performance in Education as a means of promoting this collaboration. Commission membership might be composed as follows:

3 persons nominated by the American Association of School Administrators;

3 persons nominated by the National School Boards Association;

3 persons nominated by the University Council for Educational Administration;

and 3 persons to represent the public interest to be appointed by the U.S. Commissioner of Education, one of whom shall be designated as chairman.

As a preliminary step, I propose that the American Association of School Administrators take the initiative in this matter by inviting the U.S. Commissioner of Education to convene a conference for the consideration of this proposal. If the proposal or some modification of it be found acceptable, I propose that the conference invite the three national organizations to nominate to the Commissioner their delegates, and that the Commissioner be requested to establish the Commission and appoint as members those nominated to him as well as three members at large, one of whom shall be designated the chairman.

The Commission should be charged with developing a plan for the evaluation of administrative performance and with the communication of that plan to the three organizations participating on the Commission and to the public at large. The Commission should be provided with sufficient budget to permit the employment of staff and consultants as needed. Each of the three organizations and the U.S. Office of Education might be asked to make a contribution to the budget.

The Commission should not only give careful thought to its substantive charge but also to the implementation of its recommendations. At many points in the work of the Commission it may be desirable to hear from school board groups, superintendents, professors of educational administration, numerous citizen groups, and from other bodies such as the National Association of Secondary School Principals, the National Elementary School Principals Association, and the Education Commission of the States. One year after its establishment the Commission should report to its three major constituent groups and to the public.

The composition of the Commission itself and a program of continuing interaction among groups which make up the major actors in the evaluation process should do much to provide board members, superintendents, and university professors with motivation in this most important movement. Moreover, both the substantive and the implementing recommendations of the Commission should suggest procedures which might be followed by school boards, superintendents, and professors. A better informed public probably would also create further demand that there be progress toward the evaluation of administrative performance.

References

Page 4 1 Kay Kamin, "A History of the Hunt Administration in the Chicago Public Schools". Ph.D. dissertation, Dept. of Education, University of Chicago, 1970.

Page 6 2 Lipham, J.M., et. al. "The School Board: Resolve of Conflict?" Administrator's Notebook, V. 17 (April, 1969) No. 8.

Page 6 3 McCarty, D. and Ramsey, C. The School Managers. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood, 1971.